

WARNING SIGNS OF GANG ACTIVITY

If you are afraid that your child or student is in a gang he/she probably is, or is at risk to join. The following information can be warning signs of gang involvement. One or two of these signs may just be normal teenage behavior. If you are seeing many of these signs you may be dealing with a more serious problem.

- Change in types of friends, no introduction to these new friends, calls from people with street names, such as "Shortie or "Flaco".
- Change in dress habits; preference toward one color, team, clothing brand or sports logo, beads or bandannas. Inside lining of pants pocket dyed a certain color.
- Change in behavior and personality at home, frequently out late, breaks curfews, rules and laws.
- Secretive about activities, has no respect for parent/guardian or any authority figures.
- Change in behavior at school; truancy, a drop in grades, frequent detention or suspension.
- Graffiti, symbols or numeric codes seen on personal property in room, on books, backpacks or inside baseball caps.
- Tattoos, brandings, carvings or eraser burns on the body, of initials, numbers, symbols, etc.
- Using hand signs and signals as communication when in the presence of peers.
- Unexplained cash, new and expensive material items obtained with no means of support; wearing a lot of jewelry or medallions.
- Carrying a weapon, being arrested or detained by the police frequently.
- Freely admits hanging with gang members. Photos of groups of youth throwing hand signs and wearing colors.

The risk of youth becoming involved with a gang will be higher if there is more gang activity in the area and if the individual has little or no supervision. Participation in after school programs, sports or community programs will assist in securing positive ties with the community and reduce the risk of negative and harmful peer association.

Visit our web site at: www.co.suffolk.ny.us/probation

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